

REMARKS

Independent claims 1 and 9 have been amended to improve consistency of terminology and to define more clearly over the prior art of record.

More particularly, claims 1 and 9 have been amended to recite the restraining members of claim 4 (now cancelled) which act counter to the prestressing force of the prestressing arrangement to limit the axial displacement of the intermediate plates away from each other. Claims 1 and 9 also recite that this limiting is accomplished independently of the frictional output members, thereby eliminating any suggestion that the axial travel is limited by external pressure plates, friction disks, or a flywheel.

Claims 1, 2, 4, and 6-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Rist U.S. 3,892,302. To the extent that this reference would be applied against claims as presently amended, such rejection is traversed for the reasons following.

Rist discloses an arrangement of two disks 12A, 12B on a shaft 13, and a pair of pressure plates 14A, 14B therebetween, wherein the pressure plates 14A, 14B are loaded axially away from each other by a Belleville washer 15 therebetween. In order to release the clutch disks 14A, 14B from the flywheel 10A and the reaction plate 10B, the pressure plates 14A, 14B are moved axially toward each other by the simultaneous pivoting action of levers 17A, 17B.

The only limiting of axial movement of the pressure plates 14A, 14B away from each other against the force of spring 15 occurs when the clutch is engaged by virtue of the clutch disks 12A, 12B being pressed against the flywheel 10A and the reaction plate 10B. The levers 17A, 17B and other linkage do not limit the displacement of the pressure plates away from each other, as do the restraining members in applicants' invention as claimed.

Since Rist is lacking an important element of applicants' invention, there is no anticipation. Further, since the device of Rist operates in a totally different way, no such element is suggested, so the invention is not obvious.

The claims as amended being definite and clearly patentable over the art of record, withdrawal of the rejections and early allowance are solicited.

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